

(b) *Independent living services.* The Panel has a key responsibility to assure that seriously disabled service-connected veterans who need independent living services to increase their independence in daily living are provided necessary services. In carrying out this responsibility the Panel shall review all cases which come before it to assure that the proposed program of vocational rehabilitation or independent living services includes those services necessary to enable the veteran to achieve the goals of the program.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3100)

(c) *Dependents.* The specific duties of the Panel with respect to dependents are more fully described §§ 21.3300, 21.3301, 21.3304, 21.4105, and 21.4276 of this part.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3536, 3540, 3541, 3542, 3543)

[54 FR 37332, Sept. 8, 1989]

DURATION OF REHABILITATION PROGRAMS

§ 21.70 Vocational rehabilitation.

(a) *General.* The goal of a vocational rehabilitation program is to:

(1) Evaluate and improve the veteran's ability to achieve a vocational goal;

(2) Provide services needed to qualify for suitable employment;

(3) Enable the veteran to achieve maximum independence in daily living;

(4) Enable the veteran to become employed in a suitable occupation and to maintain suitable employment.

(b) *Vocational rehabilitation program.* This term includes:

(1) The services that are needed for the accomplishment of the purposes of Chapter 31, including such counseling, diagnostic, medical, social, psychological, independent living, economic, educational, vocational, and employment services as are determined by the Department of Veterans Affairs to be needed;

(i) In the case of a veteran for whom the achievement of a vocational goal has not been found to be currently infeasible such needed services include:

(A) Determining whether a vocational goal is reasonably feasible;

(B) Improving the veteran's potential to participate in a program of services designed to achieve a vocational goal;

(C) Enabling the veteran to achieve maximum independence in daily living;

(ii) In the case of a veteran for whom achievement of a vocational goal is feasible, such needed services include assisting the veteran to become, to the maximum extent feasible, employable and to obtain and maintain suitable employment;

(2) The term also includes the monetary assistance authorized by Chapter 31 for a veteran receiving any of the services described in this paragraph.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3101(9); Pub. L. 99-576)

(c) *Duration of vocational rehabilitation.* Decisions on the duration of periods for attaining the goals named in paragraph (a) of this section are made in the course of development and approval of the Individualized Written Rehabilitation Plan. However, the duration of a vocational rehabilitation program may not exceed 48 months (or its equivalent when pursued on a part-time basis), except as provided in § 21.78.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3695, 3105)

[49 FR 40814, Oct. 18, 1984; 50 FR 9622, Mar. 11, 1985, as amended at 53 FR 50957, Dec. 19, 1988]

§ 21.72 Rehabilitation to the point of employability.

(a) *General.* Rehabilitation to the point of employability may include the services needed to:

(1) Evaluate and improve the veteran's ability to undertake training;

(2) Train the veteran to the level generally recognized as necessary for entry into employment in a suitable occupational objective. Where a particular degree, diploma, or certificate is generally necessary for entry into the occupation, e.g., an MSW for social work, the veteran shall be trained to that level.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3101(5), 3104)

(b) *When duration of training may exceed general requirements—*(1) *Employment handicap.* If the amount of training necessary to qualify for employment in a particular occupation in a geographical area where a veteran lives or will seek employment exceeds the

amount generally needed for employment in that occupation, the Department of Veterans Affairs will provide, or arrange for the necessary additional training.

(2) *Serious employment handicap.* The Department of Veterans Affairs will assist a veteran with a serious employment handicap to train to a higher level than is usually required to qualify in a particular occupation, when one of the following conditions exist:

(i) The veteran is preparing for a type of work in which he or she will be at a definite disadvantage in competing with nondisabled persons for jobs or business, and the additional training will help to offset the competitive disadvantage;

(ii) The number of feasible occupations are restricted, and additional training will enhance the veteran's employability in one of those occupations;

(iii) The number of employment opportunities within feasible occupations are restricted.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3105(c))

(c) *Responsibility for estimating duration of training.* (1) The counseling psychologist shall estimate the duration of training and the estimate shall be incorporated in the IWRP (Individualized Written Rehabilitation Plan). When the period of training is estimated to exceed 48 months, the concurrence of the Vocational Rehabilitation and Counseling Officer is required, prior to approving the IWRP, under conditions listed in § 21.78.

(2) The estimated duration of the period of training required to complete an original or amended IWRP may be extended when necessary. Authorization of an extension is the responsibility of the counseling psychologist, except as provided in paragraph (d) of this section. Any extension which will result in use of more than 48 months of entitlement must meet conditions described in § 21.78.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3695(b))

(d) *Extension of training by the vocational rehabilitation specialist.* (1) The VRS (Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist) may authorize an extension of up to six months of the period of voca-

tional rehabilitation training authorized by the IWRP when:

(i) The veteran is in *rehabilitation to the point of employability* status under § 21.190;

(ii) The veteran has completed more than half of the prescribed training;

(iii) The veteran is making satisfactory progress;

(iv) The extension is necessary to complete training;

(v) Training can be completed within six months; and

(vi) The extension will not result in use of more than 48 months of entitlement under Chapter 31 alone or in combination with other programs identified in § 21.4020.

(2) If the conditions listed in paragraph (d)(1) of this section are not met, and an extension is needed to complete the program, the case will be referred to the counseling psychologist for a determination.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3105(c))

§ 21.73 Duration of employment assistance programs.

(a) *Duration.* Employment assistance may be provided to the veteran for the period necessary to enable the veteran to secure employment in a suitable occupation, and to adjust in the employment. This period shall not exceed 18 months. A veteran may be provided such assistance if he or she is eligible for employment assistance under the provisions of § 21.47 of this part.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3105(b))

(b) *Employment assistance not charged against Chapter 31 entitlement.* The period of employment assistance provided in paragraph (a) of this section is not charged against the months of entitlement under Chapter 31 (see § 21.70).

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3105(b))

[49 FR 40814, Oct. 18, 1984, as amended at 54 FR 21216, May 17, 1989]

§ 21.74 Extended evaluation.

(a) *General.* An extended evaluation may be authorized for the period necessary to determine whether the attainment of a vocational goal is currently reasonably feasible for the veteran. The services which may be provided during the period of extended